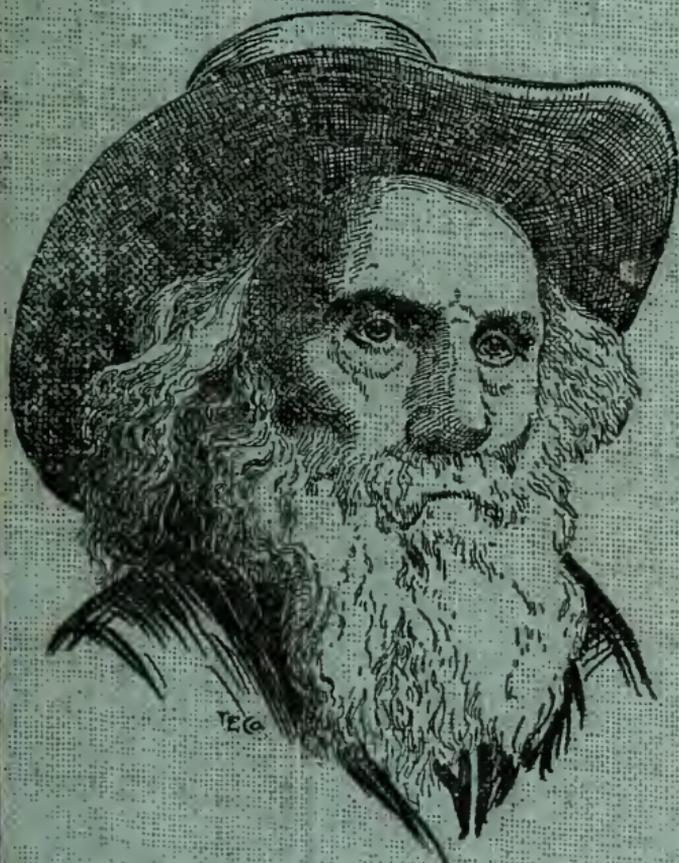


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**— UNCLE EZRA'S —
SHORT STORIES
OR CHILDREN**



By EZRA MEEKER

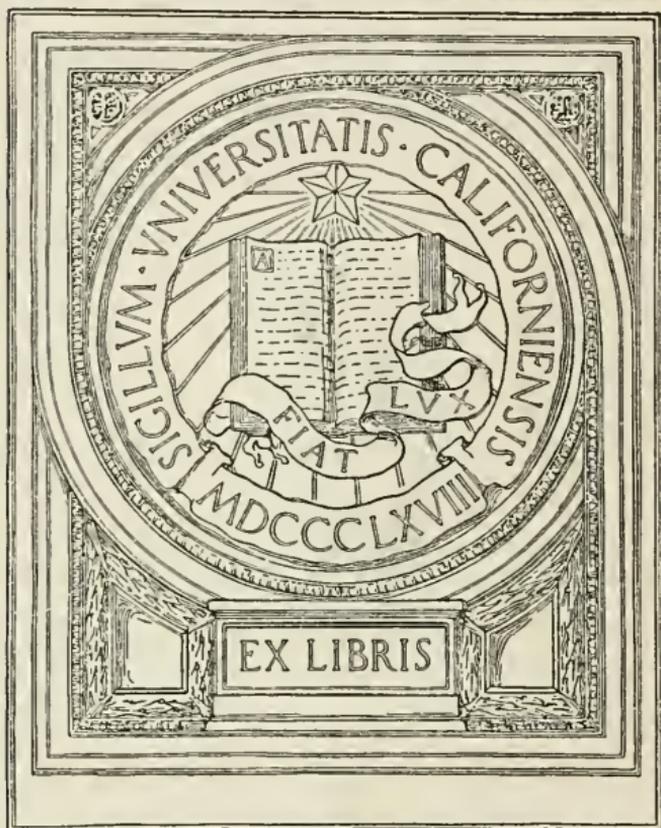
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ROBERT ERNEST COWAN

UNCLE EZRA'S
SHORT STORIES
FOR CHILDREN



By *EZRA MEEKER*

Published and Printed
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Ezra Meeker



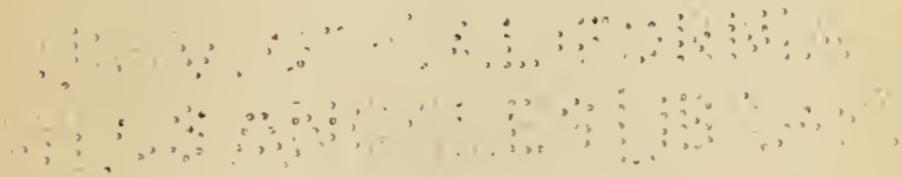
*Ezra Meeker
- 18
hopes that you
21-
your own - not
will pray
love
Ezra*

Uncle Ezra's

Short Stories for Children

By

Ezra Meeker



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A Bear Story

A boy whom we will call Wilfred lived in Alaska and Dawson until he was thirteen years old. I went with him to Seattle, Tacoma, Everett and Puyallup to show him around and to see the sights, when he came down from the North. He had never seen a building more than two stories high nor an elevator. When we went up to the top of a sixteen story building in Tacoma, he looked puzzled and said it was very nice. The same way about a street car. He had never before seen one but said it didn't beat riding in a dog sled on a smoothly beaten track of snow. When he saw the big ugly looking bear at Point Defiance park he said it reminded him of one he had seen in Eagle Alaska, that belonged to a man named _____

This one would stand up and as you see in the picture, was nearly as tall as his master standing

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by his side with his hand in the bear's mouth. I said I didn't believe it was safe and he said he didn't either but added that he had been in captivity ever since he was a baby bear and his master wouldn't allow any one to tease him. You will see by the next picture the same bear kissing the girl or the girl kissing the bear but that don't look nice at all.

Wilfred said there were two smaller ones at Dawson that would stand up and box each other just like boys; when they felt lazy they would lay down on their back and yawn just like lazy boys but never too lazy to take a peanut offered them and eat the nut and spit out the shell "too funny for anything," he said.

I saw one in a small opening in the brush near what is now Meridian street, Puyallup, that looked to me as big as as a cow, but maybe he seemed bigger because I didn't like to be so near him in the woods alone without a gun in my hands; but some specimens of bears do grow to prodigious size and have been known to weigh over a thousand pounds. The black bear in this country are not likely to attack one unless he interferes with their young; not so with the grizzly and some species in the North for they have been known to boldly attack a person in broad daylight.

Bears live on vegetables most of the time but eat fish greedily when they can get them in shallow streams. They killed some of our pigs one

day at Puyallup, just outside of what is now Pioneer park, leastwise we heard the pig squealing in the brush not more than a stone throw from the cabin. Frank and Ella took a gun and went down to hunt for the squeal but could not find either pig, bear or squeal and, anyway, soon concluded they hadn't lost any bear in the brush and returned. Hunting without dogs in thick underbrush is as the saying goes, "up hill business," that is, it can't be done successfully, but with resolute dogs that can bring them to bay, the bear will finally climb a tree and can then be shot. The larger species never climb, and so can not be taken in this way and will fight to a finish on the ground.

Naturalists tell us that as to their characteristics in their relationship, they stand between the dogs and the fur-bearers, but their nearest relatives are the racoons. When a boy, I hunted the racoon in the White river bottom, now included in the limits of the great city of Indianapolis, but never dreamed that a "coon" was any relationship to a bear. That was sixty-five years ago when I hunted the "possum and the coon," where brick blocks now stand and serves as a reminder that I am not a "kid any more in years, however I may feel in mind and spirit.

Santa Claus

“ 'Twas the night before Christmas
When all through the house,
“ Not a creature was stirring,
“ Not even a mouse.”

Have you youngsters each of you fixed on a place where you will hang up your stockings so Santa Claus will be sure to find them? Have you yet peeked up the chimney to see just how Santa could come down that way; or maybe come in at the window or crack in the floor? Bless you, little ones, Santa can get in and can find the stockings if he is hovering around about the house, but it is so fine to be setting a trap for the old fellow, we always used to do it.

I am going to tell you a story of a time when Santa didn't come to the homes of the little ones of Puyallup; when on Christmas Eve “all through the house not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse” and the youngsters were tucked snugly in their little beds, wondering why the “mamas”

had told them Santa was not coming until tomorrow and then in broad day light and maybe they could see him. This was over forty years ago. All the children could not get into the old log school house any more—too many of them—and so a new house with sure windows and a door that didn't screech was built; a great big one with one room and no upstairs to it and a great big iron stove where the teacher or big boys put cordwood in to burn, stood in the middle of the room. But the benches of the old log house had been brought over and the old water bucket stood in the same corner but the gourd hung on a new nail.

What would you youngsters think, if the "mamas" would tell you Santa wouldn't come next Christmas Eve night? Maybe you wouldn't care as you had already looked into the shop windows and told mamma what you wanted or maybe mamma had asked you to go with her and pick out what would please you best and had bought what you wanted and brought it home and spoiled the dream of stockings hung up in the chimney corner and of Santa as a real joy forever. Maybe you would care and would like it better if mamma wouldn't tell you, and let you wonder, like the little ones of Puyallup did, what in the world was going to happen.

Marion Meeker and Charly Ross took the oxen

and wagon and went out on the bluff and selected just such a tree as they wanted, with such wide spreading limbs they could hardly bring it in the wagon, so tall the top reached to the ceiling and so big around that it almost filled up one corner of the room. On Christmas day it was plain to be seen why the boys had brought so large a tree. Everybody was to have a present—two presents in fact, one a big one and then a little one so as to be sure to call everybody's name twice. The curtain put up hid the lower part of the tree but left the upper part in sight so that when the time came everybody could see the tree slowly turning around and around while all were eating dinner but nobody was allowed to look back of the curtain to see what turned the tree or see the presents on it or piled up in the corner except the three Santas dressed so that no one could tell who in all the world they were.

The mammas and aunties all had put their heads together for a dinner; and such a dinner. One had baked a whole lot of mince pies; others big cakes, so many that a lot of them were left over; then there were pickles and salad, besides the chickens and bread and butter and milk and coffee, with sure cream. Yes, I had nearly forgot, someone had killed a fat deer and the mammas had roasted it at home, so that everybody had all the venison they wanted. I think a sack of pota-

toes had been roasted in the ashes of a fire outside the schoolhouse, but in the woodshed, and there were as many outside as inside the house, but all having a jolly good time, some eating out of hand, some in their wagons, some on boxes, any place no matter where. Fortunately we had a warm Christmas and so the windows could be open and let in plenty of fresh air to the house, and make it convenient to pass the nice things to the people outside. Two mammas poured coffee and one carred around water, so that everybody could have what they wanted, and as much as they wanted, without moving from their place.

But "when are we to see Santa Claus, mamma?" more than one little one began to inquire as the dinner was about finished and the tree kept slowly turning around, giving a glimpse of the presents on the topmost branches, and the bright red, white or blue tiny little parcels containing something, but nobody (except the Santa) knew what.

Listen, the Santas are taking down the curtain; all eyes are on the tree, still slowly going round and round. What the mischief made it go that way? But the question remained unanswered amid the excitement when the first name was called. "Here," came a quick response. "Come forward, come forward; no presents delivered to others, come forward," and so the work of the

Santas began. "Willie Stewart, Willie Stewart," shouted one of the Santas in a voice as changed as the false face had changed the Santa's countenance. "Here, here, here," followed by the delivery of a pair of copper toed boots. "Willie Bonny, Charley Ross, Carrie Meeker, Maggie Miller, Charley Boatman," and half a score of other familiar names quickly followed and met response from smiling, happy faces. "What's that trouble in the back part of the house?" "Olie Meeker has fainted." Santa tried to give her a present. She is but five years old. The sight of Santa is too real and too much for her. "She just keeled over when he came," Aunt Mary said, as she dashed a cold cup of coffee in her face and spoiled her nice white dress. "Why, lawsie, I couldn't get at any water and had to do something to bring her too," auntie said when the excitement was all over and everybody laughing at her.

Except to the "wee tiny little ones" almost all the presents were of value for use, and many were home made. Carrie Meeker got a pair of real nice white dancing shoes made by her brother Marion out of buckskin uppers and light tan colored soles. The parson got two sacks of flour, some bacon and some cloth for a new suit. Small wonder the tree wouldn't hold all the presents. Many new names were added for presents as strangers were discovered or new faces came in.

None too young nor any too old—all to be remembered and all were remembered as the day wore on until the speaking and singing began and the dance of the little folks in the old cabin later.

Of course, in such a gathering one could hardly expect but that some mischief would be brewing—some perfectly harmless. Frank ' Spinning, then a little shaver, played some jokes on the boys by smuggling into the Santa's hands some pigtailed he had saved for the purpose at his father's' recent "hog killing," and had what he called a nice dish of sport, finally one of them by mistake falling into the hands of one of the girls, and the joke was turned on him, for the girl was as "mad as a March hare," which made him, as he said, feel awful "sheepish."

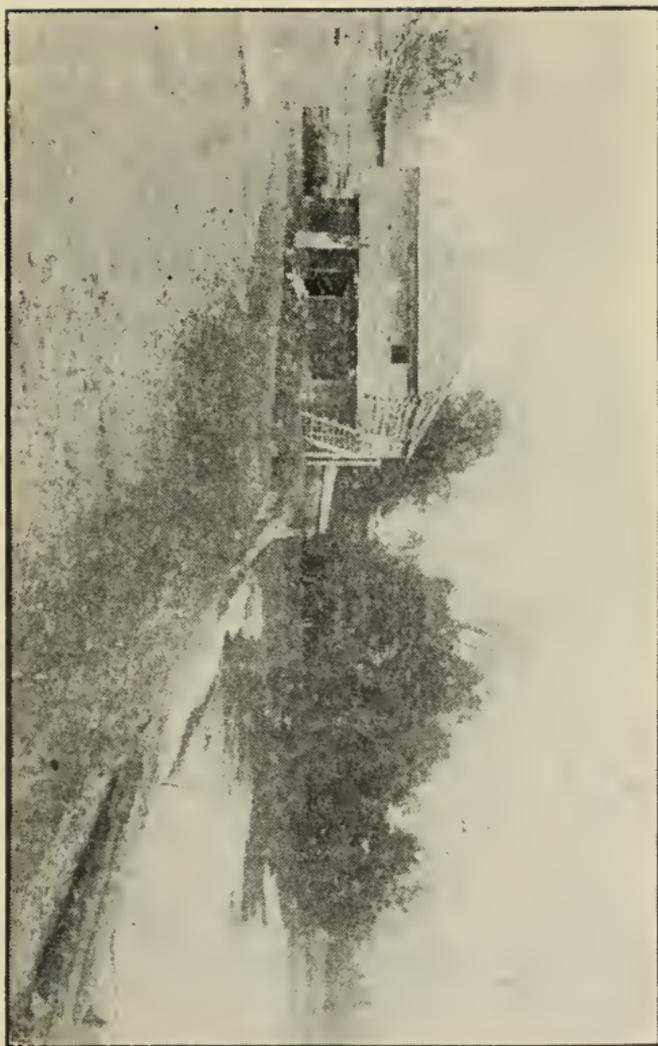
"Happy times, yes, happy times." I wonder so many people think pioneers could not be happy. Hardships, the people answer. Youngsters, do you realize that a little "roughing it," a good deal of exercise and some plain food is good for you? That a long walk is better for you than sttiing on hard benches to see other people exercise more than is good for them? Many of the people in that Puyallup school house to eat the Christmas dinner and receive the Christmas presents have gone away to a land of perpetual Christmas where they know the sweet gifts of joy come from God, their father and your father, and shall we not re-

joyce to know that some day we all will be reunited in paths of peace and usefulness?

Stilly

Jerry Stilly and Uncle John Meeker made a trip hunting claim on the hill back of Puyallup. They came in on an old trail from Steilacoom way to within a couple of miles of the valley and got lost and had to camp when night overtook them. The camp consisted simply in building a fire aganst a big dry cedar stub that soon began to burn fiercely and would evidently burn down before morning so they were compelled to stand up and watch, besides, rain began falling and they had no shelter.

My! but I wish I knew where we are" Uncle John said some time during the night. "I jinks I know well enough where we are" answered Stilly "but the deuce of it it is to know where any place else is." Stilly always had a ready answer and is now one of the very few of the pioneers left.



Indian War Times

If you will go out to Steilacoom and take a look along the front street of the town, you will see nearby Commercial street what has the appearance of a frame building fifty feet wide and over all nearly a hundred feet long.

Hidden under the weather boarding on the outside and ceiling on the inside is the logs of a building, (block house we called it) bullet proof, and without windows and two stories high. This we built soon after the outbreak of the Indian war of 1855 and proved a haven of safety not only to our own families but many of our neighbors besides. A heavy door swung at the front entrance to the lower story while an incline walk from higher ground in the rear enabled us to reach the upper story and a ladder served the purpose of a stairway inside between the two stories.

Before telling more history of the old house, I must tell of the happenings that caused us to build

it. Word came out during the night of October 28, 1855, that all the white people living on White river had been killed by the Indians and that next day the settlers of the Puyallup Valley would be massacred. A friendly indian had brought the dreadful news which we did not get until about 2 o'clock in the morning. We were living in a cabin near the edge of the heavy timber not far south of South Tacoma.

The massacre occurred less than 20 miles from where we lived, at a point on White river near the present town of Auburn and for all we knew, the Indians might be out upon us any hour. There were three men of us and each of us had a gun (I have one of the guns yet.) The first thing to do was to harness and hitch the team to the wagon open the gates so the calves could get to their mothers, turn the pigs loose, and open the chicken house door—all this without light; then the drive began with the babies and women laying close to the bottom of the wagon bed, the men with guns in hand scouting on each side the wagon, but no indians were encountered on the drive and we reached the fort (Steilacoom) in safety.

We could not in safety stop there. It was no fort at all—only an encampment and already filled with refugees from the surrounding settlements, and so we pushed on to the town and sought safety as best we could, until the house described

was built when we moved into it before the roof was on. The next day after we left our cabin, the people from the Puyallup Valley began to arrive destitute of both food and clothing and after a few days of perplexity and doubt, nineteen men pushed back into the Valley and to within ten miles of the hostile camp and escaped unharmed, bringing with them the much needed clothing and provisions.

The disturbance was so wide-spread that seventy-five block houses, like the present one, were built and great numbers of the settlers did not go back to their homes for years. The indians finally did come in force just across the water and defied the troops and in fact prevented the landing, from the steamer sent against them. A few days later we heard the guns at Fort Nisqually, which however, I have always thought it was a false alarm. Not so, however, when the captive children came in that had been held until they had forgotten their mother tongue: then we knew the gravity of our situation, but we had our troubles from other sources as well as with the Indians.

The war had brought troops, many of whom were reckless men: the makeup of the army was far below what it is now, besides this there came a trail of gamblers and other disreputable persons to vex and perplex us. The marks of shot in the block house could be seen that we knew did not come from the Indians.

The little drummer boy "Scotty" used to frequently come to see us. He was a bright little fellow and the colonel encouraged him to do so, finding it was agreeable to us. At the fort, one of the married soldiers used to get drunk, and report had it, used to beat his wife. I could give his name, but think better not as some of the descendants are yet here with us. "Scotty" had lived with these people awhile and knew the happenings. My wife one day asked "Scotty" if it was true that——— had abused his wife. "Well I can't say exactly he abused her, he only kicked and cuffed her around the house sometimes." Poor boy, he had seen so much "roughing it" that he didn't know what was or was not abuse.

A perplexing feature came from the fact of the two warring camps within the counsels of the whites as well as with the indians, a large majority of the indians were friendly and yet "how could you know". Atrocious murders had been committed by irresponsible, viscious, white men. The pioneers knew indians even in the war camps that they could trust. I had the experience and know. At the point known as "Flett's place" being overtaken by a scouting party of eleven under the eye of Chief Leschi. He said "don't you harm that man, he is our friend." Mrs. Dougherty and her children near by had the same experience. The oldest, George Dougherty, (still living) could talk

the Indian language fluently and he will tell you the same as I have here related, and yet, we all carried our guns, and lived many years in the shadow of doubt. One illustration; a child is lost; Johnny Boatman, not quite four years old. Word goes out the Indians had stolen him and the mother is crazed; the commanding officer ordered out the troops to search and avenge the loss of the child; an open threat, that to irresponsible men could easily be interpreted as license for summary action. After the lapse of a day, the child was found playing under a tree; had simply wandered off.

Then came the brutal murders of prisoners, right in the Governor's office at Olympia, and no one punished.

Many pioneers believed that they would suffer for the deed and so there kept up a feeling of uncertainty and dread that hung over us as a community for many, long, weary months.

A Fish Story

A man whom we will call McGee went out fishing one day with a pitch fork and a yoke of oxen dragging a sled. This is certainly a curious combination, you will say, for a fishing expedition, but as we shall presently see he had his wits about him and knew what he wanted. Usually, you know, when we go a'fishing we expect to carry the "catch" home in our hands or at most in a small basket with a strap over the shoulder, but this man had a large box on his sled and said he expected to fill it before he returned. I had met him in the road and when he told me the "run was on" and that he was only going over to the "creek," a couple of miles away, what should I do but turn back and go with him. The creek referred to was but four miles long and emptied into the Puyallup river a few miles above the mouth of the river. McGee followed a dimly marked, narrow, crooked

trail winding around through the brush and over logs, under leaning trees, crooked vine-maple, crab-apple and the like that compelled him to go in nearly all directions so that in going the two miles to the head of the creek it seemed like he had driven more than twice that far. The "head of the creek," is what is now known as Maplewood Springs, a large body of water running out from the foot of the bluff bordering the Puyallup valley and but a few feet above the level of the valley.

McGee knew that salmon, when on the "run," go up the stream to spawn as far as they can get, and that they won't turn around and go down stream when they meet obstacles they can't overcome. We immigrants on the Oregon Trail found them in Snake river in vast numbers, in 1852, at Salmon Falls, fully 800 miles from the sea.

The story I am telling you happened nearly fifty years ago and is a true story, only I haven't given you the exact name.

The creek just below the springs spread out several rods wide, very shallow and rapid, the water running over a beautiful pebbly bed of gravel, where the mother fish laid the eggs that in course of time hatched out and became wee, tiny baby salmon. Now note this wonder, these baby salmon know just what to do and turn their heads down stream and go to the salt water of the sea. Another wonder: these same baby salmon, when

they grow up come straight back to the channel they had traveled when they were young. Those people who have studied the habit of the salmon tell us the different varieties always return to the creek or river that gave them birth.

Mr. McGee filled his great, big box with salmon all right enough, and left a lot on the bank of the creek he couldn't take along, but before I finish the story, suppose we inquire into the wonders of this wonderful species of fish.

The salmon family is composed of nearly 100 species, but the great commercial food fish is confined to six species and produce an enormous quantity of food and individual specimens of large size. I saw one at Hume's fishery on the Columbia river that weighed 72 pounds. This was over 50 years ago and when salmon fishing had just begun; now, the value of the salmon catch on the Pacific coast alone is over twenty million dollars annually.

It is wonderful the strength of the salmon. I have watched them go up a fall seven feet high; many would fail but now and then one would succeed. They were simply struggling to get to a place to die; after they spawn they never return.

I soon found out what Mr. McGee brought his pitch fork along for. The creek was literally filled with fish—so close together that you couldn't put your foot down without stepping on a fish nearly as long as your arm and as slippery as an

eel. He straightway began to throw them out with his pitch fork and sometimes would actually throw out two at a time. The water was no more than ankle deep. The only fun I could see about it was that sometimes Mr. McGee would step on a fish and lose his balance and come down on his knee before he could recover himself. Twice he sat squarely down just as if he had grown tired and had concluded to take a rest. It was all the funnier because he couldn't himself see where the fun come in. He had come to get some fish and that was all he thought about.

When I first came into Commencement bay in June of 1853, the Indians were trolling for salmon. I do not know with what measure of success; but I do know that when taken direct from the salt water they are in the very best condition for the pan. I never in my life had seen such fish or tasted so delicious a morsel as those when I was camped on the beach, near where the smelter is now, but of course there was no Tacoma then nor thought of any city ever growing upon the spot then covered with a dense growth of timber.

A Coon Hunt

The Ferris boys came over with the dogs just after supper. Mother knew what that meant and took me out aside to say she didn't like to have me go, not that she was unwilling I should get out and have some fun but she didn't exactly like the company. Upon my telling her that I had encouraged them to come, mother consented, but cautioned me I had not better go with them again. Now there was nothing particularly bad about the Ferris boys. The worst that could be said about them was they kept a lot of dogs and spent a good deal of time hunting and didn't seem to have ambition to try to get ahead in the world though two of them were grown up nearly to manhood. I never went with them again and other boys shunned them.

If the boys had turned their attention to a little more work and not so much for sport and not let their love for hunting "get away" with them, they

would have grown up to respectable manhood and would not have been shunned by the girls as well as by some of the boys. It was a lesson I never forgot and yet I have often thought the mothers could have encouraged those boys for better ways without lowering the standard of good behaviour of their own boys.

old hound Tray was the leader and we had not gone far until he began to bay. "It's an old trail," Lem, the second oldest said, "better not stop here." "Ah, that's better" he said a few moments later as the dog changed his tone. "We'd better wait here" and so we sat down and some one began to "spin a yarn," when behold here come Tray right to us but he didn't stop. "He's close to him now," the younger boy said as the tone changed. "He's got him by gol." all three said as the dog let out a long drawn bark almost like a howl. I soon learned the boys understood the language of the dog so that they could tell instantly whether the trail was "hot" or "cold," whether the dog was puzzled by cross trails, found they could tell whether he was tracking a "coon" or "possum" or a wild cat. Upon this signal we all started for the dogs in double quick time but Mr. coon anticipated our coming jumped from the small tree he was up and raced for another nearby but much larger. We could not see the coon but knew he was treed by the action of the dogs and besides

the boys said they could see his tracks in the bark of the tree, which for the life of me I couldn't see. So, off with our coats, three axes were making chips fly on two curfs of a hickory as big as your body and which it did not take long to bring down with a crash. We had held the dogs from under the falling tree but the cunning coon had jumped before the tree had touched the ground. The dogs soon picked up the trail and after a short exciting chase, the little fellow took to a large Sycamore; but it was questionable whether he had managed to get into the hollow of the tree. The boys said they knew he was up that tree and so again the chips were made to fly. This time it was a more serious job than the first tree—much larger and tough, but the ardor did not cool until the tree came down. When the dogs were loosened, we expected them to make short work of the coon or pick up the trail quickly but they did neither and we began to think the dogs had fooled us and that we had cut the wrong tree. Lem said, "that ar coon thinks he's mighty cute but we'll catch him yet for he's in that hollow" and so the axes were brought into play again and sure enough the coon was there. Then came the work to get at him and just when we felt sure the end was near, the coon suddenly left the hollow, made a bold leap, and just got out of reach in time to go up a very large walnut tree nearby. It was now one o'clock.

What should we do? give it up and go home? Just then Tray opened up, but Lem said, "it's only a possum," he knew by the bark of the dog. One of the boys went with me to the dog and sure enough there was the "possum" up a sappling only fairly out of reach of the dog. A club or two brought him down stretched out as dead. The boy that was with me wouldn't let the dog touch him and so we carried him over to the walnut where the work had already begun of "making the chips fly." We all got so busy on the walnut that we forgot the "possum" and he left without our permission. After working a couple of hours on the walnut, we found it a bigger job than we bargained for and so when the streaks of daylight began to appear, we all took the trail home, hungry, tired and sleepy. Fine, was it?

But that was not all, I knew the owner of the land the walnut tree stood on. Was I willing to go and tell him I had helped to ruin his tree? Could I look him in the face and say I had not? But I told mother and she told father and father told the owner and offered to pay for the tree, which however he refused.

But right here boys, think seriously before you do anything you are ashamed of and never shrink from telling your mother.

The racoon is a very cunning, lively little animal but we have trapped him when he made raids

on the chickens. He has a curious habit of cleaning all food before eating as though he was washing it. Watch him if you ever get a chance. There are but few "coons" here, but what few there are are hard to get.

The walnut tree we cut was on land now within the city limits of Indianapolis, Indiana. It is sixty-five years ago since the hunt took place.

Odds and Ends

A man riding on the public road met a boy. "Your coat is too short for you my boy," he said. The boy answered "It will be long enough when I get another" whereupon the man passed on, laugh-until he met a stranger in the road. "What are you laughing at" the stranger asked." The man answered "I met a boy back on the road that made the funniest remark I ever heard. I told him his coat was too short for him and he answered "it would be a long time before he got another one." The stranger said he "didn't see anything funny about that." The man suddenly stopped laughing and said "blamed if I do either now."

Moral—Be sure to hold on to the point if you tell a joke.

Satan's Dream

We used to have lots and lots of music. Uncle John Meeker took delight in teaching the children to sing and the children took delight in the music as likewise in the opportunity offered of getting together and having a good time as well. Sometimes they would sing without accompaniment and then again one of them or most likely "Aunty" would play on the melodian and "steady them up" in their time as well as in voice. Some times I would join them with the violin and maybe Uncle John would get out his flute, then with three instruments and a dozen or more voices, the cabin would get so full of music that we would open the windows and doors to let some of it out and some fresh air in. Uncle John had one of the sweetest voices I ever heard and he seemingly had full control of it, and what is as much or more to the point he was always willing to use it, if by so doing he could give pleasure to others.

Later in life. I have known girls that learned to sing and play on the piano but would always "hang back," and would not play or sing without a great deal of coaxing and maybe not at all. Which way do you think is the nicest? that of Uncle John's way or that of the girl's way just described; this question is particularly addressed to the girls. But what about "Satan's dream," you will say and now I will tell you about it, but must first tell you a story to clear the way.

I used to play on the violin (fiddle we called it) almost any tune I came across but, somehow or another the "Devil's dream" was too much for me; I would miss a note here and there or perhaps get off the track and break down entirely. So one evening I went at it "hammer and tongs" and played it over and over again and again and got it, that is I could play the difficult parts.

The "mamma" of the house got sleepy and went to bed and went to sleep and I soon after did the same. Next morning I slipped out of bed early (as usual) started the fire in the cook stove and put on the teakettle and did some other little chores to "start the breakfast" and then took up my "fiddle" and began playing the "Devil's dream" and was playing it when the "mamma" woke up and then ever after that, she told the joke on me, how I had played the "Devil's dream" all night.

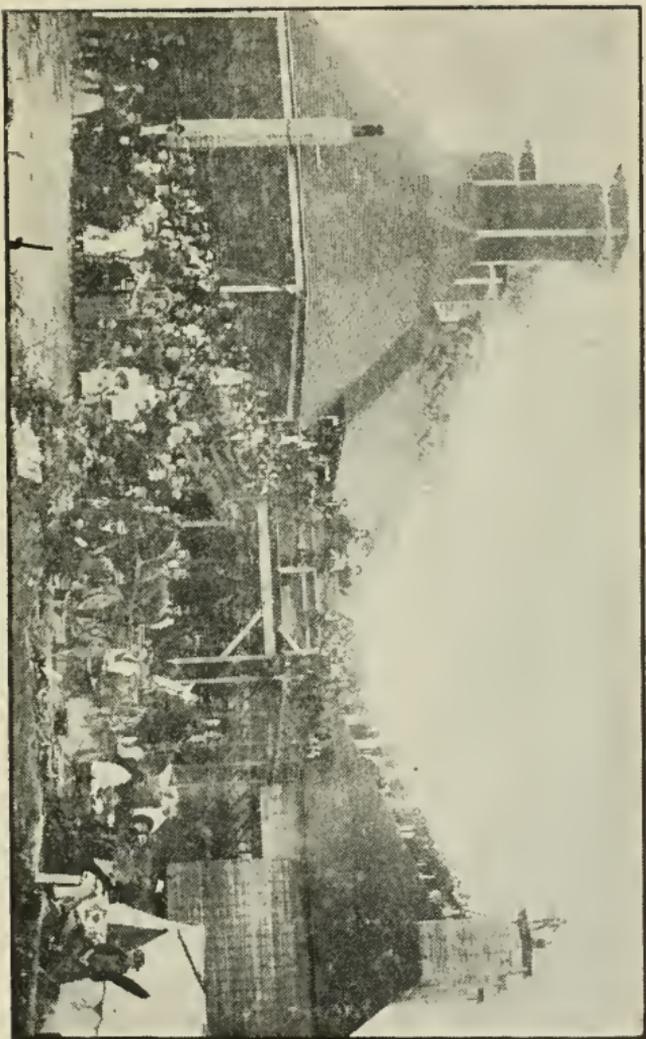
And now for Satan's dream. A presbyterian

minister, named Sloan, came down from Steilacoom to preach in the little old school house and came over to our cabin to stay all night. I could to this day, I think point out the spot in Steilacoom where he lived. Well, the Rev. gentlemen had heard about the "Devil's dream" and how I had played the tune all night and heard sundry other talk until his curiosity became excited, whereupon in a half-hearted, halting, doubting tone of voice asked if I would play "Satan's dream" for him. Ever after that the tune was known as "Satan's dream."

To school girl:—Can you bake a good pie?

Boys:—Join the Boy Scouts.

Mamma, Mamma, what is a regulitor; a man has a big clock that is a regueiter? (regulator), so asked the little boy, Marion Meeker, when the first jeweler came to Steilacoom and hung up his big clock.



One Group of Ezra Meeker's Hop Houses

Hops

I once tied two drunken indians to a tree and left them so they might be stolen away by the tribes to which they belonged. This tree stood near the spot now known as the corner of Main and Meridion streets, Puyallup. This point was then covered with standing timber and dense underbrush. Our hop business had grown to considerable dimensions and members of several tribes were picking hops. Some low down whites were prowling about for a chance to sell whiskey to the Indians, which gave us a good deal of trouble; of course, later on, when the hop business grew large and some seasons we had as many as 1,000 pickers at work, we could organize and handle such matters better.

Judge Green appointed "Uncle John" (Meeker) as United States commissioner and a deputy marshal, so that when one of this kind put in an appearance we could nab him on the second day;

we had several trusty Indians that would go and buy for us and thereby made it easy to catch the prowlers.

I used to give each woman \$1 whose child was born on the place during a hop picking season. After the rule became known I paid out several dollars each season—I think seven one season. usually in two days the mothers would be out in the field at work with the little one tied to a board leaning up against a hop pole. In the early days of the business the Indians wanted only silver for picking; this was before there was any banks in the country. The United States government, trying to get silver into circulation, would send free of express charge in sums of \$1,000 to any one depositing the amount with the government agency. This we did and the silver came to Mr. Rogers at Steilacoom where the steamer from San Francisco then landed.

One time I sent "Fred" (Meeker) out after a bag of silver containing \$1,000. He was not quite 14 years old, but even then was a good shot. His mother was uneasy but no one else knew of his going and if they had known would have been none the wiser as to the object of his trip. Fred started early and made the trip of 16 miles on horseback in three hours stopped in Steilacom but half an hour and was back home before dinner. Rogers strapped the bag securely behind the saddle and

covered it up out of sight, but it was a heavy load to carry that way, weighing, as it did, about 50 pounds.

As I think of it now it does seem risky to have sent a boy of that age so far with so much money, nearly all the way on a road where there were no houses, but Fred was equal to the occasion and didn't think of the trip as anything out of the ordinary.

The first year we had hop pickers we undertook to board the Indians. We fixed up a large table out by the woodshed and the women folk took out a great supply of vegetables, fish and bread and called to the Indians to come to dinner, leaving them to wait on themselves. Soon there came a great outcry; a few of the Indians had secured all the "grub," and left the others dinnerless. After that we put each Indian's portion on a tin plate and then we had trouble to get the plates back, many thinking the plates went with the dinner. But by the second or third year we induced the Indians to pick by the box and board themselves and we had no more trouble about the board.

It didn't take many years until we used tickets for change in paying off in the field instead of silver and although the business increased rapidly, we used less and less silver, the Indians (and by this time white pickers had come) preferred to

hold their tickets until enough had accumulated to get gold.

As time went on a wagon road was opened on the North side of the Puyallup river to the "slough" on the tide flats and some of the hop growers hauled their hops to the "slough" and "boated" them over to the Old Town wharf and shipped them by sail vessel; others hauled them to Steilacoom over a rough road, where it took two days to make the round trip; all this, of course, before there was a good road to Tacoma and some of it before the name, let alone the town of Tacoma had been thought of.

My father, Jacob R. Meeker, planted the first hops in the valley; well, I did plant a few hills the same year, but he made the real start in the business. As I think of the start, how ludicrous it seems! When his first little crop came he had the poles taken up and carried to the barn and took chairs from the house for the women folk to sit in while they picked the hops; then when he undertook to dry his second crop he closed his house tight at bottom and left a large space open at the top and so when the heat was applied and the moisture from the hops began to settle like a fog over the hops, he made the remark that if the house was turned upside down, he believed it would draw. He, however, instead of turning the house upside down, reversed conditions by opening a

draft above, so the room above the hops would remain warm and then the fog disappeared and the hops dried rapidly. After it was all over, we laughed a good deal at father about his funny remark to "turn the house upside down" to make it draw.

Before pointing the moral to this story I will tell you another story. As soon as I passed the age of 18 I joined the Sons of Temperance. The hall appears as vividly to my mind as though it were but yesterday, though it lacks but a month of being 62 years ago. It was an event in my life to reach the comradeship of young people of high purpose. The hall faced on Washington street, Indianapolis, Ind., near Meridian. In my recent trip to that city I looked for the location, but the old building was gone and a new more pretentious one occupied the lot.

"I promise not to make, buy, sell or use any spiritous or malt liquors, wine or cider as a beverage," this in short was the pledge. Any youngster, boy or girl, will be the better for signing such a pledge; but now to my story. Twenty years have passed; I have boys and girls of my own to counsel; we live in the Puyallup Valley, far removed from comradeship with the outer world; the pioneer parents counseled together resulting in a resolution that we would have a temperance lodge and that the parents would go with the youngsters.

So they did and we had a strong Good Templar lodge with the membership of boys and girls, fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers—none too young and none too old. Once a week near the bank of the Puyallup river we met to strengthen our resolution, read essays, sing songs, make speeches--anything to have a good time that would not lower our respect for ourselves or our comrades. There came a time when some of us planted hops. Aye, but you can't be a Good Templar and raise hops to make beer. "Neither make, buy or sell" Yes, I know, but the spirit of it even if you don't violate the letter. And so the controversy waxed warm.

One of our neighbors, Mrs. Ross, bless her good soul, born the same year and month I was, and one of the very few of the old set left—less than half a dozen of us—came over to "argue the question." In her zeal she "wished the storm would come and destroy our hops," not that she wished us any harm, but she "knew it was wrong" and wanted to get us on the right road again. On the other hand attempt was made to boycott any one who raised hops and didn't drink beer, and so the contention went on until the echo of it reached London when I appeared there on the market. Then the Methodist conference took up the question when the report was made that "God had cursed the hops," that the hop louse had destroyed

the hops, only to be gently reminded the ground upon which their church stood had been paid for out of the proceeds from the sale of hops.

All through this maze of conflict we all remained good friends, but were unable to settle the question for good and all;—so far as I know it is not settled yet; let you, parents that read this, settle the question in your own mind; and you youngster, think of it, if it isn't better to go with the crowd that is trying to better conditions in life than to drift with others that have no care for the future and but little for the present.

The Honey Bee

“Oh dear! Oh dear! Oh dear! I believe “old Fred has broken my knee.” These words fell from the lips of William Buck while he hopped around on one leg holding the knee of the other leg in both hands and fairly groaning with pain. Did I laugh at him? I couldn’t help it, his actions were so comical. Why do we laugh at other people’s mishaps? Will some youngster tell?

We were camped on the Plains near the Platte river, a few days’ drive out west from the Missouri. Buck and I had fitted up at Eddyville, Iowa, to cross the plains together and, among other purchases, had bought a cow of a farmer named Frederick, hence the name “Fred” given to the cow that had kicked Buck. Buck didn’t know anything about the care of stock and I did, and so it usually fell to my lot to take care of the team and the extra cow while he looked after the camp, although he was a bachelor while I was the only married

man of the camp. A few days before this, while I was leading "old Fred" to where I could tie her while milking, the cow holding back, Buck came along and hit her a rap, whereupon she forged ahead rapidly, pulled me off my feet and dragged me quite a way before I let go the rope.

My! but wasn't I mad while Buck laughed and the whole camp laughed. Why do we laugh at the mishaps of others? Did I stay mad? Not at all. Nobody could stay mad long at Buck, he was such a jolly good natured fellow—one of nature's noble men—always willing to do his part and more than his part; cleanly, scrupulously so; courteous to all; honest as the day is long; never swore; never smoked; always in good humor and always looked upon the bright side of life. Youngsters, I wish I could impress vividly upon you, this man's characteristics, to the end that you might follow in his footsteps.

"Looked upon the bright side of life," I said. Do you realize how much that means for your own happiness and the happiness of others? If you will but adopt this mode of thought!

But I must back to my story. The incidents related happened sixty years ago this last June (of 1912) and remain vividly in my mind, Buck and I separated near the big bend of Bear river, (near Soda Springs, Idaho,) on the Oregon trail, he going to California while I came on to Oregon.

But what has all this to do with the bee? You are asking, so now I will tell you

A few years after, I heard from Buck. He had been back to the "States" (as the eastern part of the country had become to be known to us folks that lived west of the Rocky mountains) and had brought out fifty swarms of bees by way of the Isthmus of Panama. Well, you will ask, "why in the world should he go to the eastern states for bees: wasn't there plenty of them here?". Not a bee in all the Oregon country when I came here nor in California either. Isn't that strange; not a bee west of the Rocky mountains.

Of course, when I speak of bees, I mean the "honey bee" for there were literally thousands of varieties of bees here that were not domesticated or did not store honey. Naturalists tell us there are 5,000 different species of bees.

Buck sent me 3 swarms by steamer to Steilacoom, where I then lived, and so far as I know, these were the first bees in the territory of Washington. I have heard of a man, but have forgotten his name, who tried to bring a swarm of bees across the plains, but failed and I believe Bucks shipment was the first to reach the coast.

Fossil remains give evidence of the honey bee in prehistoric times; by the Bible we know of the high value placed upon honey by the ancient tribes of Israel. By history we know the Romans ad-

vanced the bee with their conquests; the Colonists planted them over the Atlantic coast of America and an humble pioneer nearly completed the circuit around the world by advancing them to the Pacific, from where, by successive stages, they had come from their original home in Asia.

An ordinary swarm contain about half as many bees as there are people in Tacoma and as like with people, in some respects are made up of two classes, the worker and the drones. The drones, like the men of some tribes of Indians won't work. Only one queen is tolerated in a hive and lays all the eggs from which young bees are hatched to replenish the daily loss of the worker. Naturalists tell us a queen will lay several hundred eggs a day. Toward the last of the honey season, the workers kill off the drones. The variety of food gathered by the workers is not equal to that you children have on your tables, but is enough to satisfy the bee. The bee-bread is the fine polen of plants and is carried into the hive on the legs of the bee; the honey is gathered into a sack provided each worker bee and is already made in Nature's laboratory, that is, it does not undergo any change from the time the bee gathers it until deposited in the allotted cup of the comb.

Homing Pigeons

I hope there is not a youngster reading "Short Stories" but has a pet of some kind. A pet is not necessarily an animal or a bird, or anything that has animal or bird life; it may be a garden, a miniature machine shop or perhaps some particular object to concentrate upon; such as for instance, a holly tree or a swarm of bees.

"After we got to the summit the birds wouldn't leave us and stayed close by as we come down the mountain to heavier atmosphere." This was the word Fred Meeker received from the party (Major Ingraham, I think it was), who had taken some of his homing pigeons with them to the summit of the mountain. The rare air of nearly 15,000 feet altitude made it very difficult if not impossible for the little fellows to fly and so they stayed close to their comrades, the mountain climbers until the lower levels were reached, after which they gath-

ered courage and came home to Puyallup.

Fred had his pets—homing pigeons. He could tell every bird he had without referring to the number tag on the leg. They would all look alike to me, but Fred could pick them out by their “countenance” as one might say. His cote was out near the foot of the hill at Puyallup and favorably located for “flying” young birds to teach them to come back home. Sometimes he would take some young birds a little way off in his buggy and turn them loose; then perhaps next time send them to Tacoma by the trainmen; then next to Lake View or Hillhurst and so on by easy stretches until he actually had some birds come home from our hop office at Salem, Oregon, with a tiny message in a quill fastened to them. Youngsters, do you realize what exquisite pleasure such results would bring? What Fred Meeker did you can do if you try. Sometimes he would lose a bird; maybe a thoughtless or brutal person had killed it or perhaps it had got lost. He had one case where a bird got home weeks after time. In this instance he thought some one had held it captive. Carrier pigeons have been often used in times of war, particular so in the siege of Paris during the last century. Now, the wireless telegraph and the flying machine in a measure take the place of the pigeon, yet there will always remain a fascination in the training of this wonderful bird.

The Stampede

I went over to my neighbor Carson one morning to borrow a hoe to dig potatoes with. In those days with the virgin soil we often got nearly a bucketful to the hill; I mean one of the ten quart wooden water buckets—pails the Yankee call them. The soil was so loose the potatoes would grow way down deep and we had to be careful otherwise we would not be getting all of them. You know most of the soil in the Puyallup Valley is a sandy loam and the land when first cleared was very loose and the roots of crops would go down deep without loosening the soil with a plow. What I mean by a sandy loam is where there is decayed vegetable matter mixed in with a sandy soil as like it was here with leaf mold that had covered the ground every autumn for centuries.

“Well, what about the hoe and the stampede,” you will ask and so now I will tell you but I must

first tell you a short story—very short about Carson.

Carson had built the first bridge across the Puyallup river and when that went out with the great freshet of 1861, he re-established his ferry and so his place was on the road leading from Steilacoom and Olympia to the settlements in the Puyallup and White River Vallies and Seattle.

“Did you hear the news?” was the first word Carson spoke as the ferry boat touched the shore, “No, what news?” Carson then told me how some men had come through the Naches Pass and reported finding gold just beyond Mud mountain and how he had been crossing people all night that were going to the mines, and how Sam Mc Caw, whom we both knew, as reliable, had written a letter advising friends to come, that he thought the prospects good. Now Mud mountain is but a short way up White river from where Buckley has since been built.

I knew that if I went back home, the Mrs. would either try to persuade me from going or else consume a lot of time in “fixing me up” and so I concluded to pay truant and go at once and try secure one of the prospective rich claims. Exacting a promise from Carson to send his boy Frank over to my cabin which was only a little over a mile distant—the same cabin in Pioneer park—to let my folks know what had become of me, I walked

to my father's place nearby where Sumner has been built and told him what I had heard and asked him to let me have a horse and some "grub" (provisions) and to be quick about it. "Well, you will want a shovel and pick too and a pan and some blankets," he said and began making preparations at once. "Go and see Mead while I am getting the things ready; he is an old miner you know." Mr. Mead, referred to, then a newcomer in the valley, acquired a valuable property afterwards which he lost and later lost his life in the Nome district of Alaska while seeking to recover his fortune. I found Mead in a nearby cleanig pounding away trying to split a big balm log so he could handle it. "I'll go," he said without a moments hesitation, dropped his maul, left his ax where it was when I accosted him, left the wedges and glut hard and fast in the cut and started off to his house on a brisk walk.

When we arrived next day, we found the woods full of people with claims staked, after digging here and there and others breaking off pieces of rock, looking wise over their "discovery." There had been a discovery claim staked, recorder appointed and a townsite selected. Lo and behold the more the people went here and there, the less they knew and the exodus began while others were still arriving.

The men that come in from over the mountains

wore boots with large brass tacks and where they stepped onto a hard rock, left an imprint of the tacks on the rocks and that was all there was to the "discovery" though some were so firm in their belief that they began building a crude machine to thoroughly try out the rock.

"Uncle John" (Meeker) had caught the "fever" and had come with a pretty big roll of blankets and other "traps" and so when the conclusion was reached to go home, a great big high pack of blankets was piled on the one horse to which was added numerous camp-kettles, frying pans and the like making an odd looking load and also not a little noise. All went well however until we came to a creek crossing where all the party quickly climbed over a slippery footlog. Uncle John declared he couldn't cross that way and insisted on mounting on top the pile of blankets. As the mare entered the creek a step down into the water with her forefeet and her hind feet on the bank prepared the position for what happened. Suddenly dropping her head down to drink, Uncle John lost his hold, slipped down the mare's neck and over her head and sat as squarely down in the water as if he had planned to do so. Did we laugh? roar would be the better name for it. Uncle John never heard the last of it as a laugh would always follow the telling about it.

A Charivari

Andy Strain,, 62 and Nancy Heimer, 57, took out a marriage license at the county clerk's office at Indianapolis on the 8th day of November, 1847. The news, soon spread by volunteer emissaries, brought together a motly crowd of youngsters (and some elderly ones too) from the three centres of adjacent neighborhoods, the Railsbacks, McFarland and Brimstone, bent, as they said, to have some fun. Andy had been looked upon by all as a confirmed bachelor while everybody thought Nancy would never think of putting away the honor, (if honor it be) of being the oldest old maid in all the country around about. Everybody knew the wedding would be "pulled off" the following day and so arrangements were made accordingly. Andy was our singing master, though he couldn't sing much but we boys tolerated him because of his excentric way that made a lot of fun and because the singing schools afforded an opportunity

to "see the girls home" and the chance for the girls to "catch a beau" or give some one the "mit-ten."

The singing master, as we called him could keep time with his hand, down, right, left, (which the mischief makers would pronounce "lift,") up, or down, down, down, up, up, up, which latter would become "up, pup, purp." Somehow he would manage to keep the class together by his gesticulations often as violent as the leader of a modern brass band. A favorite practice, to have the different groups of singers to start in one following another and then reach a grand final where all were singing, gave opportunity to display his skill pacing around the room from corner to corner at the opportune time to face each group. One evening a mischievous lad accidentally, (at least he said it was accidentally) threw out his foot and tripped the leader while his hands were uplifted and brought him down face foremost, full length on the floor. Well we had had a good deal of fun at the expense of the old man and it is not to be wondered at that when the word got out that he was to be married that the spirit of mischief should seize us. And so at midnight everything was ready. Some had horns, some cowbells, while others had tin pans to beat upon, not forgetting the fife and drum. I remember one fellow had what he called a horse fiddle that made a com-

bined noise equal to a donkey braying, a bull bellowing and filing a saw. My brother had a gun but the second loading he forgot his ramrod, fired it away and silenced his noise. "Well, boys, we haven't anything to give you," the old man said, polking his head out of the door, but that wouldn't satisfy us; we must see the bride and and so the noise begun again and again after each parly till at last the bride appeared in the shadow of a heavy bark torch after which all went home apparently satisfied. No, not all, for there was one heartily ashamed of himself and continued to be so to this day. True fun does not come by annoyance of others. It's a sham.

The Holly

On the ground of what the people of Puyallup call the "Meeker Homestead" is a holly tree over thirty feet high, but has never borne a berry, though the tree is now over a quarter of a century old; and never will bear berries for its a staminate or male. Had I planted a pistilate, or female, the tree would have borne beautiful holly berries all these years and given us the same foliage as well.

Later, I came to realize the difference and planted the pistilate and now we have as beautiful bearing holly, I doubt not, as in all the world. While England is not the home of the holly, certainly the trees grow there to perfection and so when we speak of our holly we call it the "English holly" though now in Puyallup we have as beautiful holly as I ever saw in England. Once I took a tramp in England along their winding roads, bordered in so many places with high stone walls and

holly edges. It did seem like a veritable fairy land when shut out from long view. I thought of the holly trees I saw on that tramp as the most beautiful sight in all my life and think so of it yet.

The boy or girl that will plant a holly tree and care for it during his or her school years will ever in after life hold more precious the memory of the old home and those that are left at the homestead, will all the more intensely cherish the thought of the absent one with the reminder before them. No other part of the United States can produce as beautiful holly, as is grown here on the Northwest coast with its mild moist climate, the counterpart of that of England.

Plant a holly tree boys or girls and you will never regret it.



Children's Monument at Boise, Idaho

History of a Children's Monument

I will tell you a story first and then the history afterwards.

More than sixty years ago, a vast throng of people crossed the Missouri river with their wagons. Estimates have been made that had these wagons with their teams been fastened together like a railroad train, the wagon train would have extended nearly or quite 300 miles, or in other words about half the distance from Tacoma to San Francisco. There were two roads that came together about 500 miles out from the river but before reaching that point the estimate is that more than a thousand wagons had been abandoned and that, as I will tell you later 5000 people had died. I traveled with that throng near the middle of the huge train. We could drive out of the road and let teams go

by but we could not pass teams on the road.

We were camped one evening in June of 1852 when suddenly a storm came upon us and my, such sheets of water accompanied by fierce wind you can hardly imagine. It was a cloud burst—another name for the fall of water out of space to distinguish it from a heavy rain—heavier fall than a heavy rain. The tent was blown down and Buck, my partner, crawled out from under the wet canvass and into the wagon where I was sleeping. He had hardly gotten settled down until we heard a roar as of a torrent of running water intermingled with voices and shrill outcries. The camp had been engulfed by a wave or wall of water coming down the hollow following the dry creek bed, sweeping all moveable things before it, such as ox yokes, “grub boxes,” camp equipage, tents and the like. We stayed in the wagon and escaped but some of the wagons on lower ground were moved bodily quite a way and everything in the wagon wet. Fortunately a growth of willow stopped nearly everything from being carried off entirely out of reach and most all of the property was recovered the next morning, much of it damaged and some of it ruined entirely. For instance, one family lost all their sugar and salt besides the damage to their other provisions. To realize what a calamity this was you must know the conditions on the Plains. This was in 1852. No settlement had

been made west of the Missouri river and one could not go to a store and buy to replenish his stock even if he had the money, which many did not have. People that had crossed out knew they must take enough provisions with them to last from the crossing of the Missouri to the Pacific Coast. They could not turn back for the road was so filled with wagons all going one way that they could not make any headway. We had met nine wagons trying to go back, a desperate undertaking. These were driven by woman and children, the men had all died of cholera. You need not wonder that when the loss of provisions became known that strong men wept and women could not restrain themselves for it might mean starvation for themselves and their children. They had not yet driven five hundred miles and had yet over 1500 to go. We believe now had it not been for the great number of deaths on the Plains that year (1852) that real famine conditions would have prevailed towards the end of the trip. As it was, many were without supplies and entirely dependent on others more fortunate until the relief trains met us, sent out from Oregon by the great hearted pioneers who had gone to Oregon in previous years. Five thousand people, we believe, died on the way, which would mean one out of every ten that crossed the Missouri that year. Many think this estimate too low and I now think it is.

but is only an estimate and can never be ascertained in exact figures, but enough is known of the suffering and deaths of the pioneers and of the results that followed their achievements to place them in a class to be remembered by the generations that have followed and are yet to follow and this is why numerous monuments have been erected to their memory.

I will now tell you the history of a particular monument erected by the children of Boise City, Idaho.

I drove into the city with my ox team and camped next to the postoffice and in sight of the state house and told the people I wanted them to erect a monument in memory of the Oregon pioneers. Some one suggested to have one erected by the children. The mayor of the city favored this plan and the governor of the state gave his approval and both of the newspapers did the same. The school board met and gave permission to try and so, accompanied by the superintendent, all the schools were visited, thirty-three addresses made and in two days nearly one thousand children contributed and enough money obtained to erect a granite monument you see in the picture; the state board convened and gave permission to place it on the state house grounds, where it stands today as a children's monument to the pioneers.

Before the contributions were taken, ordinary

letter size sheets were prepared with a heading on each with blanks where each child could sign the name, age, grade and amount contributed together with the name of the school. These lists were known as the roll of honor, the sheets bound in book form and deposited with the State Historical society for safe keeping. What a precious document this will be in later years for the grown up men and women to look over the list, see their own signatures that were written in their childhood and point with pride to the granite monument that will stand for centuries to perpetuate, not only the memory of the pioneers, yet also the names of the actors of the later generation

I wish the children of the state of Washington would do what the children, not only in Idaho, but in other states have already done. Take up this work. Ask your father and mother and your teacher what they think about it.

More Bear Stories

“Oh those bears won't hurt anybody, you folks are just 'Big Feard,' thats' all. If you have ever been in camp with a lot of boys, or maybe you will have a like experience elsewhere, you may have noticed that almost sure there is some one that is smarter than the rest, at least thinks he is; has done the bravest thing of any and can tell the biggest story of his own prowess—no one else equal to him according to his own estimate of himself. Well, I knew of one “grown up” that felt that way but before I tell you about that, I will tell you a story in which he was an actor. We will call his name Champion, though that may not be his real name as, for aught I know he is living around about here yet although the incident occurred 31 years ago.

Champion was with the party that was surveying the line for the Northern Pacific railroad over the Cascade mountains. The work was done in

the winter time after the snow had fallen on the foot hills of the mountains. The engineers could make better headway on the snow where the logs and brush were covered up than they could on the bare ground where a great deal of work had to be done to clear the line. In the latter part of winter the bear began to put in an appearance after waking up from their long sleep. I knew several of the men in the camp and they all said the same thing they never saw so many bears as there was on that trip nor where they were so tame. The work then was very high up in the mountains where white men had never been before and the bears seemed not to be afraid nor inclined to disturb the men.

One day they were moving camp and quite a number of the men were following the trail with big packs on their back. Champion, who was a big stout fellow, had forged ahead till he was out of sight of the party. Hearing smething behind him he turned to see a bear close up on the trail, sniffing the bacon he had in his pack on his back. Champion didn't take time to think about the bacon, but dropped his pack as quick as you could say "scat" and took to the first tree nearby. The bear, hearing the voice of the men coming up the trail, moved out of sight but before Champion could get down off the tree, his companions were in sight and the big laugh was on him. The chaffing that followed

was too much for Champion and he left the camp soon after;—moral, don't brag.

Another funny incident occurred in this same camp. J. C. Taylor, who, I think lives in Orting, yet was one of the party.

A bear had become troublesome around the camp attracted by the camp fire and food. So the men would throw him a hot biscuit and laugh at his antics, pawing on the ground to cool it. Taylor became tired of the bears' company and sent to another camp for a gun and could obtain only a big "horse pistol." Soon after, early one morning, Taylor discovered the bear lying near the embers of the camp fire and began to "pepper" away at bruin which, of course, roused the whole camp and thirty-five men followed Taylor's example as to dress, or rather undress, gathered hold of anything in sight such as butcher knives, clubs, anything, and struck off after Taylor up the trail and they actually did kill the bear, which was a young one only half grown. What a funny picture that would make—thirty-five men without clothes running on a trail barefoot in the snow.

If these stories were not so thoroughly authenticated by different men that I know, I would hesitate to print them, but I have no doubt they are true.

Many people in Tacoma will remember Dr. Wing. I knew him well. Later in this same sea-

son, the Dr. went up to the survey camp "a fishing." The cook put the beans on to cook and went with him. Upon approaching the camp, when returning, they spied a bear eating the beans. Somehow in the hurry to get away, the bear caught the camp kettle on his head and out he went with it on his head bang-it-a-bang as far as they could see or hear him for they could hear the "banging" a long time after they lost sight of the bear. The kettle was not found and they never knew how long the bear remained muzzled.

There were eleven of these surveying camps and over 300 men and every camp had its bear story to tell. This was when the survey for the Northern Pacific railroad through the Stampede Pass established the line over the Cascade mountains.



The Ivy Vine

A Puyallup Pioneer Story.

When you go to Puyallup, go to Pioneer park and see the ivy vine. It does not now cover the cabin like you see in the picture but instead, there are eight cement columns that support cement beams that in turn support the mass of vines above, the whole, providing a nice little bower with a fountain in the centre.

“But what about the ivy vine?” you will say, and that in part is what I am going to tell you but its a pretty long story and a good deal else in it for the “Grey Beards” to read and that I hope will also interest “mother” as well as you youngsters. The ivy vine stands close up to where the corner of the cabin stood and marks the spot where we lived in pioneer days. It is over forty years old. The ladies of Puyallup took a notion

to mark the spot as a land mark in the history of Puyallup where the first cabin stood and consequently where the first settlement was made in what originally was "Puyallup Town." Now you know the town is spread out in area to fully six square miles with pretentious signs of a city,—brick blocks, paved streets, cement sidewalks and the like, where, when the cabin was built a dense forest around about covered the land and a part of it a swamp. On one of the supporting beams is a tablet inscribed:

"Site of the first home of Erza Meeker who presented this park to Puyallup in 1889.—Erected 1911."

The ladies invited me to be present at the dedication services. Being then on my second trip over the Oregon trail I could not attend and instead talked into a phonograph so that my voice, as well as my words, might be heard, but an unexpected large number (over a thousand) attending all could not hear and so what I had to say was read. As this address contains a history of the cabin, besides a good deal of pioneer life, I will print it here although quite too long for a short story and quite too "old" for the little ones unless the mamma might conclude to read it aloud to them.

"Your purpose to on this day dedicate an enduring monument on the site of the old cabin in

Pioneer park appeals to me with peculiar force, reviving as it does precious memories of the almost forgotten past. My mind harks back to the virgin forest surrounding the cabin; to the twilight concert of the bird songsters; to the dripping dews of the dense foliage of the trees; to the pleasant gatherings within the cabin; to the old time music of the violin, flute, melodeon, and finally the piano, mingled with the voices of many now hushed and hidden from us; to the simple life of the pioneer; to the cheerful glow of the double open fires within the cabin; to the more cheerful glow of contentment notwithstanding the stern battle of life confronting the inmates of the cabin—all these visions, vividly arising before me not only intensify my interest in this occasion, but bring uppermost in mind the importance of the work.

“Let me now speak to you as though I were present in person as well as in voice. Let me join with you to read the lessons of the hour. It is the pioneers themselves who are to be dedicated to a newer realism of the meaning of pioneer life as well as for later generations that have followed and are yet to follow—lessons of patience, industry, contentment in a word, what we may call, for the lack of a better name, the homely virtues of the pioneers. Let us review these lessons and compare them with the lessons of present every day life. not with blind zeal for the ways of the past or blind prejudice

against present conditions. Herein lies the great central important point of this and kindred occasions whereby to build up better citizenship, intenser patriotism, love of country and the flag and good will among men. As we better understand each other or the ways of each generation, we are sure to profit by their failures on the one hand as well as by their successes on the other. The difference between a civilized and untutored people lies in the application of this principle, and we perhaps build better than we know or can realize, in the furtherance of such work consummated here today; if we walk in the experience of the past we dispel the clouds of doubt that may hover before our vision of the future.

"This cabin was built in 1864; another of like dimensions stood immediately east of it; a double fireplace built with soft lava rock found near the forks of the river, gave out cheer for the long winter evenings; a lean-to on the south side the whole length of both cabins added 60 per cent more space; the well, 84 feet deep (a driven six-inch pipe) is about a rod south of the cabin, and while it never yielded the coveted pure water, it developed the fact that we had a soil of unfathomable depth.

"May we not for a few moments indulge in some old-time reminiscences? When we entered this cabin we were without a team, without a

wagon, without money and but scant supply of household goods or clothing; seven cows and a steer (Harry), a few pigs and a dozen or so of chickens comprised our worldly belongings, albeit the bears divided the pig with us and the skunks took their share of the chickens. The loss of the steamship Northener had carried all our accumulations with it, and also the revered brother, Oliver Meeker, who, had he lived, was destined to have made his mark in the annals of the history of this great state. One cow traded to Robert Moore for a steer (Jack) to mate the one we had gave us a team.

“If the walls of this cabin had had ears and could speak, we could hear of the councils when the shoes gave out; of the trip to Steilacoom for two sides of leather, a shoe hammer, awls, thread and the like; of the lasts made from split cedar blocks; of shoe pegs split with a case knife and seasoned in the oven; of how the oldest pig suffered and died that we might have bristles for the wax ends; of how with a borrowed auger and with our own ax a sled was made and work in earnest in the clearing began! of how in two years the transplanted orchard began to yield; of how the raspberries blackberries and other small fruit came into full bearing and the salmon berries were neglected and siwash muck-a-muck had lost its attraction; of how the steamed lady-finger potatoes

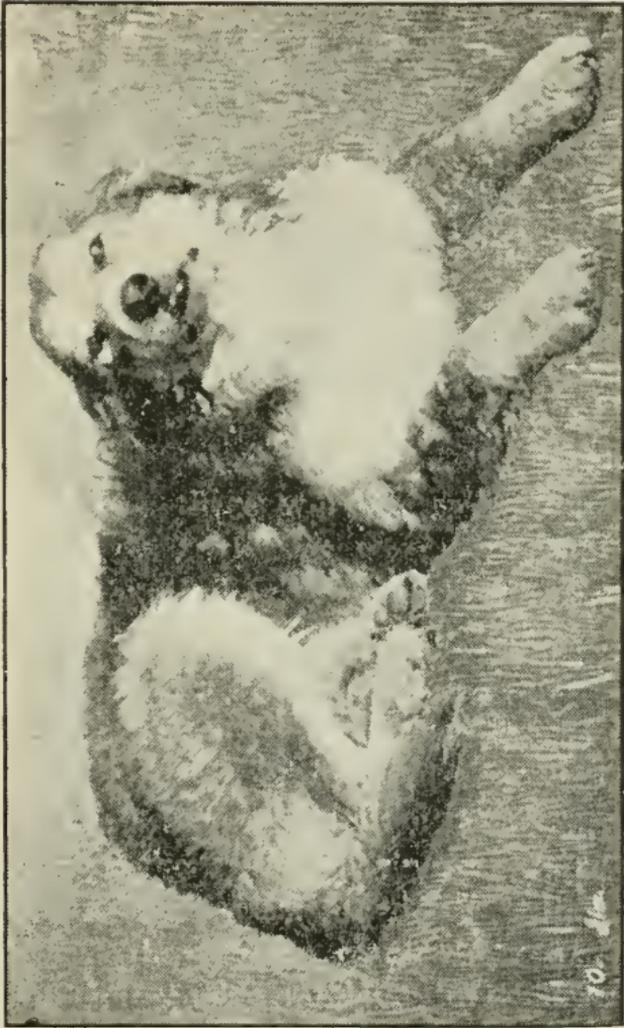
would burst open like popcorn, and of how the meat of the baked kidney potatoes would open as white as the driven snow—small things, to be sure, but we may well remember that the sum of life's happenings is made up of small things, and that as keen enjoyment of life exists within the walls of a cabin as in a palace.

‘Kind greetings to all.’

Take a Chair

Mr. Huntington, who lived near the mouth of the Cowlitz river in 1852, went out a hunting and accidentally shot himself in the leg. Pioneers never liked to be idle and so he concluded to make some chairs while confined to the house. His neighbor, a Frenchman, (I have forgotten his name) came in one day to see him. Take a chair Mr. ; take a chair, Mr. Huntington said. Looking a little puzzled, the visitor took one in his hand and instead of sitting down on it, deliberately walked off home, leaving Mr. Huntington laughing and wondering whether or not the Frenchman did it for a joke or whether he thought his neighbor wanted to make a present to him.

The Frenchman kept the chair, and as there was never afterwards anything said about it, Mr. Huntington never knew which. What do you think?



Jim

I hope there isn't a boy or girl that reads the story of "Jim" but has a pet of their own. I well knew that if they have, then the story will be more fully appreciated. Imagine my feeling when I awoke in the car on the morning of August 20th (1912) to find that Jim was gone. We had been close friends for over six years and a half, traveling most of the time with the ox team. Jim had not been only a friend, but a body guard as well and watchman of the tent or wagon. You will see by the picture that Jim was a collie, an exceptional intelligent breed of dogs. He was an exceptional fine specimen of his breed. His odd name came in this way. I got him from a man named James, who lived in Puyallup, and called him "James"—Jim for short. He was as intense in his dislikes as in his friendship. The ox Dave hooked Jim with his straight horn early in the trip

and ever after Jim manifested an intense hatred of the ox and seemed always ready to annoy him. Jim and the ox Dandy were better friends but later in the trip as Jim got older he concluded he had no use for the friendship of either ox. I do not doubt but Jim traveled three times as far as the oxen did. He would run away ahead on the road nearly out of sight and then come back as fast as he could run to the wagon; then the next moment he would be off to one side or the other running after birds, rabbits or anything that had motion. I do not doubt but Jim ran far enough on that trip to go clear around the world; the oxen traveled 8000 miles.

We ran across a big rattlesnake one day—four feet long and eleven rattles and Jim narrowly escaped the fangs of the poisonous reptile. I must however tell you first how it came I lost Jim. Going back a little, we encountered a cloud burst in the Rocky mountains and very, very rough roads, Dandy lost nearly all his shoes and became so lame I couldn't use him at all and so I concluded to ship home from Cheyenne, Wyoming. I put the wagon and Dave and Dandy in a box car and came with them in the car—Jim of course with me. I left the car door open for ventilation. Jim slipped his head out of the collar during the night and at one of the frequent stops got out of the car and couldn't get back, and so, after nearly

seven years of travel together when we were within four days of home he was lost and I now fear for good and all. I yet have faint hope as I have offered a handsome reward for intelligence that will lead to his recovery. If Jim is found he will go into the park with the oxen and later into the glass case.

One day in Wyoming on my first trip (1906) a wolf crossed the road just behind the wagon and Jim tackled him but by the time I got out of the wagon the wolf run and Jim after him, hip-a-te-cut, if you know what that means,—I called Jim back and as soon as he turned, what should te pesky wolf do but turn also and run Jim a tight race to within twenty feet of the wagon, after which the wolf gave up the chase and put off up the slope of the hill to the ridge near by, and out of sight and we drove on. We hadn't gone a quarter of a mile before we saw the wolf peeking at us from the ridge and again and again he would disappear and then show himself and kept this up for at least two miles. Our gun was out of order or he wouldn't have been allowed to do this the second time, as he was within easy rifle range.

Jim youlndn't get out of the wagon when left alone with it and would not let any one in it when Mr. Mardon, the dirver, and myself were absent. In some way one night on the east side of New York City Jim was caught and I lost track

of him for three days and only recovered him by advertising and paid twenty dollars reward, no doubt, to the thief who had stolen him.

Jim was a great fighter and would tackle any dog that came along, no matter how big, and I never knew him but once to get the worst of the fight. One day in Kansas City he got into a fight and a big loaded truck going down hill came along and run over both dogs and killed the other dog as the saying goes, "dead as a door nail," whatever that may mean—anyway the dog was dead and Jim was bleeding so that I thought sure he would die. I took him to a veterinary surgeon and had his loosened teeth removed but his throat was so swollen he could hardly swallow and Mr. Mardon fed him soup and milk, with a spoon and would hold his head up till the soup would "go down." Then one day, (I think it was in Buffalo) a negro dog catcher threw his net but didn't quite catch Jim and attempted to take him by hand, but soon let go as Jim not only showed his teeth but used them. My, but wasn't that darky mad? But by this time Jim was in the wagon and Mr. Mardon, who would fight at the drop of a hat, stopped the Negro and there came very near being a riot right then and there; the street speedily filled up with excited men ready to take Jim's part. Another time Jim came along in the road where a cow hooked him over a wire fence where the calf was.

but Jim didn't bother the calf as he was glad enough to get away without a broken rib. One day he got his foot under the wheel of our own wagon and I made sure it was broken but it was not, yet he nursed it for a week by riding in the wagon. He never would ride in the wagon except during a thunder storm. One day a sharp clap of thunder frightened Jim so that he jumped from the ground clear into the wagon while in motion, and landed on my feet; how in the world he could do it I never could tell. At one place where we were crossing a bridge with a rapid running river fully twenty feet below, Mardon suddenly seized Jim and threw him into the roaring torrent. I didn't like it a bit, and Jim came out showing he too resented the act, and wouldn't make friends with Mr. Mardon for several days. Jim would sleep on the ground close by the foot of my cot in the tent and sometimes under the cot and woe betide an intruder unless bid to be still. Mardon had a way of talking cross to Jim when in fact he didn't mean anything—only a habit but Jim didn't like it and would often come around close by me and often root his nose against me in token of friendship. He would often come in the morning to wake me up and then go out and run around the tent and bark as if to say "I'll give you no chance to sleep" and then come back to see whether I had gotten out of bed. I

have often said Jim understood the English language better than many men I knew and was more willing to mind me than some boys I have heard of that didn't want to mind their mamma. I always spoke to Jim in a low tone of voice and know to a certainty that he perfectly understood the meaning of many words. I have seen him sitting on his haunches looking intently into my face when conversing, sometimes turning his head a little to one side with a look as if to say "I didn't quite catch that." Oftentimes I would walk ahead of the wagon for miles at a time, sometimes for exercise, sometimes looking out ahead for a camping place, or maybe to get away from the dust. Jim always would accompany me. On these walks he would be full of his antics sometimes one way and sometimes another. A favorite pastime, upon returning from a long run ahead, would be to get in the way and bother me about walking and would hardly ever desist until I would hit him a sharp rap on his nose with my knuckles—half in fun and half in earnest—often, however, soon followed by a tug at my trouser leg or maybe my hand from a rear attack, by Jim, who had not forgotten the rap but wanted to continue the fun. I do not now remember having ever struck Jim to chastise him during the almost seven years we were together.

The Last Drive

I will now tell you about the last drive with the oxen. Two months more and seven years will have passed into history since I made the first drive on the trip just ended. This drive I will now write about was only forty miles. I had before driven with the oxen over eight thousand miles and quite a stretch of it over mountains and many miles of rough roads besides.

When the arrangement was made to put the oxen and wagon in Point Defiance Park, Tacoma, for good and all, Dave was in Seattle and Dandy in Puyallup. Dandy was lame and couldn't work, (he is well now) and so I had shafts made for the big wagon and Dave hauled it alone. I thought at first I might have trouble with him as he had bothered me a good deal while breaking him in, but he didn't, and took right hold of the work in the shafts alone, the same as he had done alongside of Dandy with the wagon tongue between

them. I had a short yoke made for him so that the draft came on his neck the same as it did when the two oxen worked together in the long yoke.

The first few miles out from Seattle the roads were good and Dave walked briskly along as fast as he and Dandy walked when working together.

but long towards night he began to slow up, puff a little and put his tongue out. The big wagon with considerable load in it was rather too much for him. I could not find shelter without driving down a hill. I thought while going down one steep pitch that I might have trouble with it. Lo and behold rain began to fall and I didn't get out from this place for a week although it was but eight miles out from Seattle. Sure enough when we did come to the steep pitch we did have trouble. Dave always was a fool about going up hill—wanted always to go on a run—while Dandy would take it more moderate and sensible. Well, Dave's feet slipped from under him and down he came, nearly rolled over on his back, broke one of the shafts and split the other and played hob generally. This was the first bad break I had had on my long trip of 8,000 miles. Well, in a couple of hours we, (two nearby neighbors helped) got things fixed up and a passing team pulled the wagon up to the road but I only had time to drive six miles to Kent—8 days gone. Next day rain came again and I could only get to Auburn—an-

other stretch of six miles. Nearby Auburn is where the dreadful Indian massacre of the white people took place fifty-seven years ago. I knew all the people that were massacred and many of the Indians, but I cannot stop now to tell you the sad story. We, (Dave and I) have now been out from Seattle ten days and I thought we will surely get to Puyallup tonight, but lo and behold, when I arrived at Frank Spinning's place near Sumner word was passed that the road to Puyallup was "all torn up" and that it was utterly impossible to drive through. Then came prolonged rain and other work thick and fast upon my hands and blessed if it wasn't another week before I reached Puyallup with the team—17 days from Seattle. Did Dave and Dandy know each other? Indeed they did as could be seen by their salutation in their actions as well as by voice. Dandy was soon licking Dave's neck, as like he so often did on the trip and Dave stretched out his head as if to say "that feels awful good." Although separated but two months they seemed rejoiced to be together again. Then the shafts must be taken off and the tongue put in; the short yoke put away and the old one hunted up ready for the final stretch from Puyallup to Tacoma. Only to think of this nine mile drive without incident to finish up the eight thousand and more within the last seven years. Did my mind go back to many incidents

on that trip; of the time we landed at The Dalles after dark and the storm that followed; of the long hill where Dave gave out and we could go but twice the length of the wagon and oxen without stopping to rest; of when the ox kicked me and nearly broke my leg; of how I was lame for two months or more from the effects of the kick; of how we floundered in the snow on the Blue mountains; of the sand storm on Snake river to blind us; of the cloud burst that overtook us? Yes, its all ended now, and Dave and Dandy will have a long rest in the park before they go into the glass case for good and all.



Reminiscences

When we only had the ox team the trips to Steilacoom meant two days away from home. These were times before we had much of anything to sell and to stop overnight in town drew too heavy on the small store of silver and so it came about that we would drive out part of the way, drive in early the next morning and get out of town before night and sometimes camp again or maybe drive home after night. Steilacoom then was as big as Seattle and did as much trade as Seattle and the people had great confidence in the future of the city. On one trip a wild cat ran right close up to me before discovering my presence. I had stopped in the road and gone to the head of the team when the little fellow came around a short turn of the road and almost bumped up against me, but almost as quick as lightning, leaped off into the brush and out of sight. I had heard some dogs barking but quite a way off and

presume they were on the track of the cat. At another time in the Stuck river valley I ran across a cougar or rather he ran across my track, but that was a very different thing from a wild cat. This fellow, the cougar, slipped out of sight as soon as he saw me and probably made off from me as fast as he could though he was coming in my direction on a log when I last saw him. I didn't stay there to look him up. I had no gun with me and was willing to put all the distance possible between him and myself and in the shortest possible time. However, the cougar, in this climate seldom attacks a person and not unless pressed by hunger. I knew of a case on the Cowlitz valley where three had chased a man who barely escaped into his cabin, but who afterwards killed all three, to find they were in a starving condition. My neighbor, D. M. Ross, once with his dog ran one up a tree and staid by the tree until one of his boys could get a gun and which took over two hours to accomplish. He undoubtedly ran a great risk though the animal was not hungry having killed and dragged off one of Ross' sheep; but he made movements several times to come down and seemingly was prevented from doing so by the noise Mr. Ross would make pounding on the tree and halloing at the top of his voice. I tell you it takes nerve to do that and I am free to say I havn't lost any cougar that I want

to find and corner in that way. Finally Bob Parker, who lived nearby where Sumner now is, picked the cougar off, the first shot. Bob was a crack shot and a great bear hunter. He has recently died making one more missing of the very few of the real old set left, which you can now almost count upon the fingers of one hand. I only know of three of the old pioneers left of the Steilacoom set, unless we count Steve Judson, who was a boy when he came to Steilacoom in 1852, I think.

An amusing incident occurred on one of the trips to Steilacoom, Frank Meeker, then an unsophisticated boy of nine years, had accompanied me. We were then clearing land quite a way from the house and needed a dinner horn. I told Thayer, with whom we were dealing, what I wanted. He showed me his stock, all short. I told him I wanted a long horn. A man standing by told me that I could get one from Shafer(at the brewery). Several bystanders heard the talk and all except myself saw the joke but being busy fortunately did not go, and later, after they had given up catching me and had dispersed, what should I do but go to the brewery for a "long horn." "A long horn?" Shafer responded in astonishment and in such a tone of voice that light was let into my brain and we had a good laugh over it under promise of not giving it away. The jokers though missed their

quarry and were none the wiser as to the outcome of their trap until my next trip when I gave it away—too good to keep. It was on this trip or the next one to it that the great wind storm overtook us, the wind breaking off limbs and branches till the air seemed to be filled with them; timber fell all around about, lightening struck a tree and set fire to it and the rain fell in torrents. After the storm abated a little we started on but encountered numerous fallen trees, either to cut out, bridge up to or go around. The lightening struck a tree nearby and set it on fire. The bolt followed the grain of the wood nearly around the tree peeling out a deep wide sliver leaving a spiral flame, a unique spectacle I had never seen before or since. The tree stands, or did a few years ago, about a mile northwest of the station on the Puyallup old line electric road, known as Midland. Finally we reached the valley where the alder lay in rows and in some places two or three deep and so, after working until near 2 o'clock we finally gave it up, unhitched the team, left the wagon standing in the woods and made our way as best we could to the cabin, to a cheerful fire, a loving welcome backed by a hot supper to make us forget all bother of the day and think of the pleasures of a real cabin home. A few years after this (I think in 1872) we experienced an earthquake that shook up the valley in great shape and threw down or broke off

hundreds of trees both in the valley and on the hill. We at first could hear the trees breaking nearby, then the larger timber on the hills until the sound mingled until merged in a roar to strike terror in the minds of all. The oxen broke loose in the stable, the chickens flew off the roosts and confusion reigned supreme for awhile. This was about ten o'clock at night after which there came several lighter shocks followed by a trembling of the earth for the remainder of the night. An Indian washer-woman "Old Sall," we called her, camped nearby, ran away and we did not hear from her for two days, to find her a few miles up the valley with some Indian friends. There is nothing more terrifying than a heavy shock of an earthquake to bring the feeling of utter helplessness that follows.

The "Old Sall" mentioned as running away from the earthquake was much married but always to the same man; four times before they became satisfied. First they were married according to the Indian custom. Then Sloan (the same that called for Satan's dream) while teaching and preaching at the reservation persuaded them they ought to be married in the church they had joined, which they did. Then some one told them that that ceremony was no good and that they must go to a justice of the peace and so up came "Old Sall" and her spouse to Uncle John Meeker, (who was then

justice) to be married again. A little later they were persuaded to join the Catholics and were told all they had done before was wrong and so for the fourth time and final, they were married by the priest and both now lie in the Puyallup Indian graveyard near each other.

The Ox

"Jack" kicked me while I was in a stooping position with my back to him, in the exact spot to send me over a complete summersault to land in the brush nearby. The boys laughed as I gathered myself up to say I didn't see anything to laugh about, whereupon they laughed all the more hearty, and so long, I had to join them. Why do we laugh at other people's mishaps? We had cleared out a fence row on the north line of the homestead which is now Main street, Puyallup, and had unloaded some crooked alder rails off the sled when the ox kicked me. Jack was the off ox and we all the time had to watch him, like I have had to watch the Dave ox, now soon to be in Point Defiance park. Harry, Jack's mate, never lifted a foot to kick. Dandy, Dave's mate is like Harry, never kicked or hooked but always in good humor. He too is to be in the park, where he will remain with Dave, having a good time until in the course of time both die when both will

be mounted and take their accustomed place alongside the tongue of the wagon, to remain in the big glass case, for nobody knows how long—maybe until all now living in the world has gone to join the great majority and another generation besides.

“Jack, when he kicked me, could hardly properly be called an ox. We had just begun to “break him in.” At that time (46 years ago) we didn’t have a horse team nor for that matter, a wagon either and we took a couple of wild steers and yoked them up for a team. A steer, when trained to work, is then called an ox; not so with cows. When we trained a cow to work on the plains, we still called her a cow but when we trained a steer to work then we called him an ox. Harry and Jack became noted oxen and as one of the neighbors said would “pull anything that had two ends.” Harry and Jack never had any shoes on, because they worked most of the time on the soft bottom land that did not wear their hoofs down to the quick. Not so with Dave and Dandy that I drove over three ranges of mountains from Puyallup to Washington City by the way of New York and other trips, eight thousand miles in all where we encountered long stretches of rocky or sharp flinty gravel roads. I think Dave was shod fourteen times and Dandy eleven times and they always struggled to get away; once, on the summit of the Rocky mountains we had to throw Dave

and tie him hard and fast before we could shoe him.

It takes two shoes to one foot for an ox instead of one as for a horse, though the fastening is the same, that is by nailing into the hoof. Once Dandy's hoofs became so worn that I couldn't fasten a shoe on him and so I had what we called leather boots put on that left a track like an elephant, but he couldn't pull well with them on.

I have often been asked how old an ox will live to be. I never knew a yoke over fourteen years old, but I once heard of one (a yoke) that lived to be twenty-four. Oxen, like cows are turned off for beef before getting very old and younger ones take their place; not so in this country with the horse, but in some parts of Europe horse meat is used and I presume horses are not kept until old age renders them useless, like they are in this country.

The ox has had much to do with the settlement of the country. The pioneers could take care of an ox team in a new settlement so much cheaper than a horse team, that that fact alone would have been conclusive, but aside from this they were better for the work in the clearings or in breaking up the vast stretches of wild prairie sod. We used to work four or five yoke to the plow and when night come unhitched and turned them on the unbroken sod to pasture for the night.

The ox is patient and usually quite obedient, but when they get heated and thirsty they become headstrong and reckless and won't mind at all. Dave and Dandy one day took off the road to a water hole and apparently nothing could stop them until they had got into the water and mud so deep it became a puzzling question how to get them out, but of course, I did get them out else they would not now be here ready to go into the park to have the "time of their lives."

We work them in this country under a wooden yoke and without lines to guide them; not so in some countries where the draft falls to the head instead of the neck as where a yoke is used.

The ox is perhaps one of the earliest beasts of burden, dating back more than 4,000 years, and is protected by the Mosiacal law, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn."

I will close this chapter on the ox by telling a story of one of my boyhood pranks. We boys used to think it was rare sport to yoke up calves and "play farming." We made our own yokes, often out of a piece of fence rail, and bows of hazel that grew abundant where we lived. Sometimes the calves would "turn the yoke" by throwing their hind parts apart and putting their heads together, when lo, and behold, the yoke would be under their necks instead of on top; so one day we "righted them up" and tied their tails together and

which prevented them from turning. One of the bows coming out left the calves free, each to go his own way, when to our dismay one of them lost his tail, and ever after that, was known as "bob-tail." Father then put a stop to our "pranks" and the fun was off but we soon found other fields for mischief that did no harm yet opened the way to spend the surplus energy within us.

"As dumb as an ox" is a very common expression dating back as far as my memory goes. In fact the ox is not so dumb as a casual observer might think. Dave and Dandy know me as far as they can see; sometimes when I go to them in the morning, Dave will lift his head, bow his neck, stretch out his body and sometimes extend a foot as if to say "good morning to you; glad to see you." I think Dandy has been driven on the streets of a hundred cities and towns and I never knew him to be at a loss how to return to the stable or watering trough, once he had been there and was started on a return trip.

The Prairie Schooner

Did you ever read the story of the "one hoss shay?" If you never have, get the book "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" and read it; it is a delightful story. Of the building as the author puts it:

“ ‘N’ the way t’ fix it, uz I maintain,
“Is only jest
“ ‘T make that place uz strong
“Uz the rest.”

Then when the critical time came, the story goes on to say:

“How it went to pieces all at once—
“All at once, and nothing first—
“Just as bubbles do when they burst.”

Now this is the way the Prairie Schooner in the big glass case in the park was built. The idea was to make all parts equally strong and the workmen were so successful that only 50 cents repair was made on the whole drive from Puyallup to New York and to Washington, a distance of 4,000 miles and occupying 22 months to finish the trip. Whether the “Schooner” in the park will fall to pieces “all at once” like the parson’s one-hoss shay none of us will live long enough to see.

I will tell you about the building. First we had the remains of three old wagons that crossed the plains nearly 60 years ago to draw from for material. You can see in the near front wheel the hub that my neighbor, James, used in his wagon in crossing the plains in 1852; then there are the irons of three old wagons in use on the plains that same year; then we supplemented this with selected material and had the wagon “made over” again, this time with steel tire and new bed. If you visit the park, look carefully to see the difference from

the wagons you can see on the streets. This one has a wooden axletree. Did you ever see one before with a wooden axle? I doubt it. See the lynch pin near the end of the axle to key the wheel on. Why do you use tar? Because if we used grease the spokes would soon come loose and then the wheel would go down like the "one-hoss shay," or maybe "just as bubbles do when they burst."

But when that time comes with this "schooner" (wagon) all the people now in this world will have gone and a new generation will have come.

Now then, why do we call them "prairie schooners?" I can't say; probably it is because the bed is boat-shaped. Why do we make the wagon box crooked? I don't know. This type of wagon came to us from England and I suppose the pioneers continued to build this way because their grandfathers did.

Look again closer and you will see oarlocks on each side. I crossed a big river 70 rods wide in this box. Then look for the photograph on the glass and you will see an illustration of the crossing. On my trip to Washington I came very near getting into a bad scrape crossing Little Sandy, a narrow stream not far from the summit of the Rocky mountains. It looked too deep to ford but wasn't wide enough seemingly to warrant unloading to ferry over in the wagon box and so I said

“here goes.” The down grade pushed the wagon along. Dave and Dandy got into swimming water and kept going long enough until the oxen got a foot hold and pulled the wagon out without wetting much of anything.

At another time, on this same trip, we encountered a cloud burst that wet a lot of our things. This also was in the Rocky mountains and before we knew what was happening the water was all around about the wagon and up to the axle trees and we had to hustle to get away to higher ground. One gets into all sorts of scrapes in a trip like this drive across the continent, but somehow or another by watching he can get out of them and feel just as good as if nothing had happened; in fact, it is scrapes that sharpen one’s wits and puts him on his mettle—what a humdrum drone this life would be if we didn’t have some obstacles to overcome!

In crossing the river referred to we did get into a sure enough scrape; you can see the snap shot of it on the glass. I have moving pictures of it also. We ran hard aground out in the middle of the river or rather on a bar of quicksand and had to get out of the boat. As soon as one stepped on the sand his feet would begin to give away from under him. If he stood still he would soon sink down so deep that his boots would stick in the sand. If he pulled hard he would pull his feet out of them unless he was very careful. To make

matters worse the dog got out in the middle of the river and we were afraid to leave him on the sand bar. I finally got out of the boat (wagon box) as did two men with me and got afloat again.

I remember fording this same river (the Loup fork of the Platte) in 1852, along with a large number of wagons, fastened together with ropes or chains so that if a wagon got into trouble, the teams in front would help to pull it out. The quicksand would cease to sustain the wagon wheels so suddenly that it would drop a few inches with a jolt and up again the wheel would come as new sand was struck, then down again it would go, up and down, precisely as if the wagons were passing over a rough corduroy road that "nearly jolted the life out of us," as the women folk said after it was over and no wonder, for the river at this point was nearly half a mile wide.

Many of the pioneers crossed rivers in their wagon boxes and very few lost their lives in doing so. The difference in one of these prairie schooner wagon boxes from that of a scow shaped flat bottom boat is that the wagon box has the ribs on the outside, while in a boat they are on the inside.

Uncle Ezra Gets an Office

I run once for office and succeeded in getting elected. That was when there were two towns here on Commencement bay and no city. The name of one of the towns first was "Commencement Bay City" afterwards changed and called Tacoma, and then came the second town and called "New Tacoma" and after the new town was established then the first town came to be known as "Old Tacoma"

Well, when the new town came into existance, most of the people in it lived under the hill where the terminals of the railroad used to be and most the business of the town was transacted there. Most all the people came to town either by the railroad or by boats, in fact that was about the only way they could get there. Pacific ave. was full of stumps and mud holes and some of them so bad it was about all a team could do to pull an empty wagon through especially along about 24th street where the ground was springy and soft.

Some frame houses had been built at the head of the street near the Headquarters building but down on Eleventh street was considered out of town. I remember coming along one day and saw Isaac Pincus digging stumps on the corner of Pacific avenue and Eleventh where the Pacific National bank used to be and asked him why he came out there in the country to build a house. He has often laughed at me about the remark and I suppose he will yet if his attention is called to it. I think he told me he had paid \$350 for the lot. I know I bought one on the avenue next to the Donnelly hotel for \$200; and afterward sold it to Eben Pierce for \$350. At that time the road district of the Puyallup valley extended down to the bay and took in the new town as well and the question came up as to who should be elected road supervisor for the district. The town folks didn't want the "country Jakes" to have the office and the "country Jackes" didn't want the town people to have it. The "country Jakes" said if the town people gets the office they would put all the work on the streets and the town people said if the "country Jakes" got it they would put all the work on the roads in the valley and so there was a genuine clean cut split between the two parties and both had seemingly lost sight of the real point which was to get a road opened from the valley to the town. And so when the election

day approached, the "country Jakes" were all astir to agree on a candidate, when lo and behold, they were divided among themselves, one party wanting to have the road working done on the north side of the river, while the other party wanted it on the south side. We of the south side stood firm and I became a candidate for an office. Then the next thing was to get out the vote. We could drive our teams down to the tide flats on the north side of the river, but couldn't cross the river and if we could have crossed no road led around the head of the bay. So two men came ahead and chartered three canoes to ferry the "Jakes" over, and the teams were left on the tide flats while the owners crossed over to vote. Lo and behold, the tide went out before some of them could get passage over. Some floundered around in the mud while others got across the river and followed the Indian trail to the creek and then as best they could to the wharf, where the election was held. We "Jakies" didn't lose a vote and carried the election by a narrow majority but some of our crowd didn't get across the tide flats until after dark and home after midnight. I call this pioneering—anyway it was strenuous work but, after all, we had a jolly good time and went home in good spirits.

Its too long a story to tell much of the details of what followed; of how we established a road

working camp near Clear creek; how as supervisor I assessed an additional poll tax of ten dollars and an additional property tax of two dollars to the thousand; how the transient men "kicked" (and I didn't blame them) and the property owners protested; how men's wages were garnisheed and property threatened until most all had paid; how one case was carried into court and after the tax had nearly all been collected and expended, Judge Green decided the law was invalid. But the road was open, the mud holes of Pacific avenue filled up and some roots cut out, the money gone, and so the query came to the kickers, "what are you going to do about it?" and, after much grumbling and a good deal of threatening, nothing was done about it.

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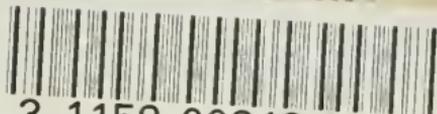
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